

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC 9742

DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1213

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BU, US

SUBJECT: VERUSIO TRAVEL TO BULGARIA

TREASURY PLEASE PASS TO US CUSTOMS SERVICE
STATE FOR S/NM AND EUR/EE

REF: ROME 8528

1. CLEARANCE FOR MR. STANLEY F. VERUSIO, CUSTOMS ATTACHE, ROME, TO COME TO BULGARIA IS HEREBY WITHDRAWN. WE HAD BEEN UNDER IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS COMING ONLY TO VARNA FOR CLOSING OF CUSTOMS-SPONSORED TRAINING SEMINAR THERE. REFTEL HOWEVER INDICATES THAT HE "WILL REPRESENT US COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS" AND OTHER HIGH US OFFICIALS AND WISHES TO HAVE APPOINTMENTS WITH HIGH-LEVEL BULGARIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS IN THAT CAPACITY.

2. ROME MAY NOT BE AWARE, BECAUSE TRAFFIC ON THAT SUBJECT HAS NOT BEEN REPEATED THERE, THAT WE ARE SKATING ON VERY THIN ICE HERE IN BULGARIA, AND THAT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMS AND THEIR BULGARIAN COUNTERPARTS HAS BEEN BUILT UP IN LOW-KEY MANNER OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. WE HAVE ALSO DISCOURAGED DEA VISITS HERE BECAUSE OF THE TENUOUSNESS
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OF THE PRESENT COOPERATION. WE SEE NO NEED AT THIS TIME

FOR THE KIND OF CONVERSATIONS THAT MR. VERUSIO SEEMS TO HAVE IN MIND, WHETHER THEY BE CONDUCTED IN VARNA OR SOFIA. IN FACT, WE ARE DISTRESSED BY REFTEL'S ASSUMPTION THAT APPOINTMENTS BETWEEN U.S. AND BULGARIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ARE SET UP BY THIS EMBASSY AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE. ACTUALLY WE HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO MONITOR THEM VERY CLOSELY TO AVOID JEOPARDIZING WHAT HAS BEEN BUILT UP.

3. FROM WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR, THE VARNA CUSTOMS TRAINING COURSE IS A DISTINCT FEATHER IN THE US CAP, AND SHOULD SERVE FURTHER TO DEVELOP A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN US AUTHORITIES DEALING WITH NARCOTICS MATTERS AND THEIR BULGARIAN COUNTERPARTS. WE MUST HANDLE THIS RELATIONSHIP CAREFULLY AND WHENEVER US OFFICIALS PROPOSE VISITS HERE WE NEED TO KNOW EXACTLY WHY THAT VISIT IS NECESSARY AND WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO ACCOMPLISH.
HERZ

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